

VESSELS ON FOREIGN STATIONS WITHOUT REGULAR
PURSERS.

LETTER

FROM THE

SECRETARY OF THE NAVY,

IN ANSWER TO

*A resolution of the House asking the number of vessels on foreign stations
without regular pursers.*

JANUARY 12, 1859.—Laid upon the table and ordered to be printed.

NAVY DEPARTMENT, *January 11, 1859.*

SIR: The resolution of the House of Representatives, dated December 23, 1853, which directs "that the Secretary of the Navy communicate to this House, if not incompatible with the public interest, the number of vessels now in commission on foreign stations having no regular pursers on board, and the reasons why they are not supplied," has been received, and I have the honor to reply as follows:

That at present there are nine naval vessels employed on foreign stations without regular pursers, viz: sloop-of-war Falmouth, store-ships Release and Relief, steamer Water Witch, brigs Perry, Bainbridge, and Dolphin, and schooner Fennimore Cooper.

In addition to this number, there are five chartered steamers and one revenue steamer, attached to the Paraguay expedition, which have no pursers on board, viz: steamers Southern Star, Atalanta, Caledonia, Metacommet, M. W. Chapin, and Harriet Lane, for which pursers on board of other vessels are acting, and for which they can receive no additional compensation.

The department was unable to assign pursers to the above named vessels on account of the insufficient number of officers belonging to that corps. Sixty-four only are allowed by law. Eleven of that number are unemployed. Of these one has been in the service forty-nine years, two more than forty-one years, and one more than thirty-five years; one has been recently invalided from a foreign station and

sent to the United States; five are old pursers who have been relieved from duty within a year, and one has just been appointed. There are three pursers who have returned within three months from sea, and are employed in settling their accounts.

It has not been the practice of the department, except in extreme cases, to order old pursers, who have served in turn in vessels of all classes, to sea again in small vessels, as, in view of their age and past services, it would seem contrary to the spirit and intention of the law to require them to perform duties in such vessels for which the act of Congress regulating their pay provides less compensation than their leave of absence pay.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obedient servant,

ISAAC TOUCEY.

Hon. JAMES L. ORR,

Speaker of the House of Representatives.